

# Insight

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Public Relations/Public Affairs

*Are you giving your  
public relations and public affairs  
efforts the pink slip?*

**With some experts saying that an economic recovery is right around the corner, many people are asking:  
Is my organization prepared?**

**One thing is certain:** Today's world is different from what it was before the recession. Emerging technologies, an exploding social media scene, and a shift in attitudes and how people communicate require organizations to have strategies designed for 2010 realities.

So crumple up that pink slip and make your communications and public affairs efforts economy-proof.

**GOFF & HOWARD** INC.

Public Relations/Public Affairs

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strategic counsel and planning • media relations • mediatraining • social media • lobbying and government relations • crisis communications • grassroots and grasstops organizing • community relations reputation management • internal communications • event planning • writing and editing • design and production

“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.”

*George Bernard Shaw*

Preparing for the future in tight times may seem difficult, but being ready for what lies ahead can be time- and cost-efficient. Through communications and public affairs efforts, you can stay in touch with partners, constituencies, clients, community leaders, and other key audiences who are critical to your long-term success.

Sure, many of these people know you, but have you told them lately what you stand for or why your organization is relevant in a changing world? Have you talked to them using the tools they use? And have you added to your list of potential audiences lately?

“Ongoing communications and public affairs efforts are crucial to maintaining relationships that help an organization succeed through good and bad times,” said Chris Georgacas, president of Goff & Howard. “Think of these activities as regular exercise – those who are consistent achieve the best results.”

Now is the time to poise your organization for post-recovery opportunities. Many of Goff & Howard’s clients have done just that – building and maintaining strong relationships, forging new partnerships, using new communications tools, and planning strategically – all on a cost-efficient budget.

## Build coalitions

Goff & Howard clients ranging from Pfizer to On Board Midwest are benefiting from the power of partnerships.



**Pfizer** is working with other health care stakeholders to expand opportunities for addressing common health care issues and sharing wellness information.

“Having strong professional relationships enables Pfizer to reach a larger network of people and advocate for a broader range of issues,” said Julie Idelkope, director of government relations for Pfizer. “Goff & Howard helps us identify who we should talk to and how we can support and complement each other’s efforts.”



**On Board Midwest**, a coalition of individuals, businesses, elected officials, and organizations who support a high-speed rail line from Saint Paul to Chicago, has already built a network of several hundred members, more than 600 Facebook followers, and almost 400 Twitter followers since launching in April. With limited resources, the group has coordinated its Web site, blog, YouTube and Flickr channels, Facebook page, and Twitter account with targeted grassroots work to help build momentum for the route and support for a broader statewide rail plan to be released by the Minnesota Department of Transportation later this year.

“We’ve integrated the latest communications tools into a traditional public affairs campaign to effectively build relationships with decision makers, businesses, lawmakers and the media. We have also been able to stay in close touch with a broad base of supporters,” said Karri Plowman, director of Central Corridor and east metro partnerships. “And we’ve done it all using virtually no paper or postage.”



## Stay relevant

To help make sure the organization remains a constant, up-to-date resource for members, local leaders, and other audiences, Goff and Howard helped the Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce revamp its Web site and engage in the world of social media.

“We needed our Web site to be a resource that our members will use and depend on,” said Dan Scott, chair of the chamber’s board of directors. “We called on Goff & Howard for expertise in developing an online strategy to help us strengthen relationships with our members and other audiences.”

The right balance of technology, strategy and content has helped make the chamber Web site a place to network, share information, coordinate events, and connect visitors with other communications tools — a true reflection of the organization itself.

## Keep up with the chatter

A few short years ago, you might have worried about missing the morning paper. But today there are also tweets, blogs, and online comments that might mention your organization — and they can spread the news far and wide with ease.

“When organizations don’t monitor and participate in social media, they run the risk of other people shaping opinions about them faster and more broadly than they would have ever thought possible,” said Mike Zipko, who leads Goff & Howard’s social media efforts. “That is a big risk to an organization’s reputation.”

A client that recently experienced layoffs relied on Goff & Howard to monitor the reaction on Twitter and online sources that we specialize in tracking. We helped the client quickly and strategically address reporters’ tweets asking for firsthand stories from laid-off employees, and illustrated the importance of organizations using the same communications and networking tools that their key audiences use.

## Make space for social media

Organizations around the country, both big and small, are asking themselves how they should enter the world of social media. Everyone’s answer is slightly different, but the two certainties are that strategy is essential, and specialized expertise is needed to develop that strategy.

Enter Goff & Howard. Our experts are available to talk with you about what social media is, how it can benefit your organization, how to manage the risks, and what mix of activities may be right for you.

Contact Goff & Howard at 651/292-8062 if you would like us to speak at an upcoming meeting of your organization’s leaders or communications team.



## What's new at



Facebook



Twitter



LinkedIn



Blogspot

## Communications checklist

- Are you communicating where your employees and customers get their information? (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, blogs, online publications and comments, etc.)
- Are you building and maintaining professional relationships with others that have similar needs and ideas?
- Do you communicate regularly with employees about workplace updates and how the organization is weathering the economy?
- Do you know if you have employees that tweet or blog?
- Does your organization have an updated Web site?
- Does your organization have an up-to-date strategic plan?
- Does your organization have an up-to-date crisis communications process?
- Do you monitor what's being said about your organization on blogs, Twitter, online comment boards, etc.?

If you answered "no" to any of these questions, now is the time to think about how to get into a regular, results-oriented, cost-effective communications routine. Contact Goff & Howard for help in setting priorities and a personalized strategy to achieve your goals.